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10.2 Philosophy Of The Division Of Child And Family Services Major Objectives And Practice Manual

Major objectives:

The Division of Child and Family Services will work to ensure that children and their caregivers live in safe, permanent homes. Our goal in assisting a family is for the family to become self-directed and build the capacities necessary for its members to live safely and for the family unit to function successfully with the basic and special needs of all members adequately met. When working to accomplish this goal, staff and administrators will work diligently to ensure they adhere to the practice principles, objectives, and procedures specified in this manual.

Summary of the Law

No governing law.

Procedures

In performing their duties and applying the procedures set forth in this manual, Child and Family Services staff and administrators will attempt at all times to implement and consider the following principles.

1. Meaningful child and family participation in decision-making is vitally important.
 - a. All children and family members shall have a voice in influencing decisions made about their lives, to the level of their abilities, even when specialized communication services are required.
 - b. Child and family members shall be involved in the planning process, and shall be supported in requesting changes to their plan.
2. Multi-disciplinary teams provide the most effective way to work with families.
3. Family and personal dynamics are best served with the use of differential and multi-disciplinary skills. The use of multi-disciplinary teams is vital in ensuring best practice decision-making.
4. The regular use of child and family teams is the best way to engage the family to prevent and reduce incidents of abuse.

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- a. Prevention efforts are used to resolve family conflicts and behavioral or emotional concerns before there is a need for the family to become deeply involved in the child welfare system.
 - b. In a family where abuse has already occurred, interventions are developed with the goal of preventing any future incidents of abuse.
 5. The process of providing assistance to children and families requires a team. Reliance on a service team that periodically meets face-to-face and consistently coordinates assessment, case planning, service coordination, tracking progress, and adapting the case plan with added attention to the unique factors involved in family violence.
 6. Strengths-based assessments are vitally important. They should be produced with attention to:
 - a. The family's underlying needs and conditions.
 - b. Engaging the family in crafting effective interventions that address the family's needs.
 - c. Developing interventions with a family when there are family conflicts, or a family member's behavioral or emotional needs are not being met.
 - d. Safety issues for all family members when abuse has occurred.
 7. Development of child and family plans that are adaptable to the changing needs of a child and family throughout the case are fundamental. The child and family plan must incorporate the family's input, utilize the available assessments, reflect the service team's contributions, be individualized, anticipate crucial transitions, ensure safety for both child and adult victims, and be employed as a functional case tool that guides actions in the case.
 8. Workers and supervisors regularly review and evaluate plan implementation (including crisis and safety plans), timelines, and the promised contributions by team members (including the family). Attention to and consideration of the progress of each family member is also very important, and the contributions of team members toward the achievement of plan goals.
 9. To be effective in their efforts, workers and administrators must strive to do what is needed
 10. To achieve the goal of safety and permanence for each child and family member:
 - a. Performance expectations and program principles will assist workers to understand their role and responsibility in realizing case goals.

- 87 b. Administrative support for flexibility, creative solutions, persistent efforts,
88 and the effort to protect both child and adult victims must be present if
89 workers are to help families realize the goals of permanence and
90 protection for all family members.
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10.3 Overarching Major Objectives And Practice Guidelines

Major objectives:

It is the major objectives of Child and Family Services to meet its responsibilities under the law and to practice in a manner consistent with the following fundamental principles:

Protection: Children have the right to be safe from abuse, neglect, and unnecessary or needless dependency. Swift intervention is necessary when this right is violated.

Development: Children and families need consistent nurturing in a healthy environment to achieve their developmental potential.

Permanency: All children need and are entitled to enduring relationships that provide a sense of family, stability, and belonging.

Cultural Responsiveness: Children and families have the right to be understood within the context of their own family rules, traditions, history, and culture.

Family Foundation: Children can be assured a better chance for healthy personal growth and development in a safe, permanent home with enduring relationships that provide them with a sense of family, stability, and belonging.

Partnerships: The entire community shares the responsibility to create an environment that helps families raise children to their fullest potential.

Organizational Competence: Committed, qualified, trained, and skilled staff, supported by an effectively structured organization, help ensure positive outcomes for children and families.

Treatment Professionals: Children and families need a relationship with an accepting, concerned, empathic worker who can confront difficult issues and effectively assist individuals in their process toward positive change.

Summary of the Law

No governing statutes.

Procedure

Practice principles cannot stand alone. They must be supported by practice standards and goals. Principles and standards must be applied together to achieve desired outcomes. The following standards are applicable throughout this manual.

1. Children who are neglected or abused will have immediate and thorough assessments leading to decisive, quick remedies for the immediate circumstances, followed by long-range planning for permanency and well-being.
2. Children and families will be actively involved in identifying their strengths and needs, and in matching services to identified needs.
3. Service plans and services will be based on an individualized service plan, using a family team (including the family, where possible and appropriate, and key support systems and providers), employing a comprehensive assessment of the child and family's needs, and attending to and utilizing the strengths of the child and his/her family strengths.
4. Individualized plans will include specific steps and services to reinforce identified strengths and meet the needs of the family. Plans will specify steps to be taken by each member of the team, time frames for accomplishment of goals, and concrete actions for monitoring the progress of the child and family.
5. Service planning and implementation will be built on a comprehensive array of services designed to permit children and families to achieve the goals of safety, permanency, and well-being.
6. Children and families will receive individualized services matched to their strengths and needs and, where required, services will be created to respond to those needs.
7. Critical decisions about children and families, such as service plan development and modification, removal, placement, and permanency, whenever possible, will be made by a team including the child and his/her family, the family's informal helping systems, foster parents, and formal agency stakeholders.
8. Services provided to children and families will respect their cultural, ethnic, and religious heritage.
9. Services will be provided in the home-based and neighborhood-based settings that are most appropriate for the child and family's needs.

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173 10. Services are provided in the least restrictive, most normalized setting appropriate
174 for the child and family's needs.
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176 11. Siblings are placed together. When this is not possible or appropriate, siblings
177 should have frequent opportunities for visits.
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179 12. Children are placed in close proximity to their family and have frequent
180 opportunities for visits.
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182 13. Children in placement are provided with the support needed to permit them to
183 achieve their educational and vocational potential with the goal of becoming self-
184 sufficient adults.
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186 14. Children receive adequate, timely medical and mental health care that is
187 responsive to their needs.
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189 15. Services are provided by competent staff and providers who are adequately
190 trained and who have workloads at a level that permit practice consistent with
191 these principles.
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